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VINDICATION

OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION

AND
REFORMATION,

Against the
ATTEMPTS of a Late **LETTER**

Pretending to shew
That All **RELIGIONS** have a like **PLEA,**

AND
That there can be no such Sins as *Heresie* and *Schism*,
If every Mans Sense and Reason are to guide him in

MATTERS of FAITH.

By W. King, 1688. of Dublin.



Printed in the Year 1688.

THE NEW YORK

RELIGION

OF THE

Against the

ATTEMPTS of a Late

Pretending to show

that the Rites have a like TENDENCY

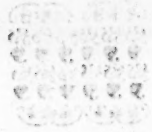
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that there can be no such thing as a Rite which is not

the same in all the Churches and in all the

MAGAZINE OF FAITH



Printed in the Year 1828

A Vindication of the Christian Religion, and Reformation, &c.

C H A P. I.

§ 1. **T**Is a great Surprise to a man, who loves our common Christianity, to observe with what a strange Partiality some behave themselves in the management of their Controversies; in which they shew themselves so blindly wedded to their own Faction, that they seem heartily to wish that all other Christians would renounce their Christianity. And hence it is, that since they cannot persuade us to join with them, they endeavour, all they can, to prevail with us absolutely to renounce the Faith and Religion of Christ. Our common Faith is attacked by Atheists and Deists on the one hand, and Hereticks and Enthusiasts on the other; and these men, instead of defending it against such, strike in with them, and take up and enforce their Arguments.

This is the design of the *Protestant Plea for a Socinian*, written by a R. C. which endeavours to persuade all Protestants to turn Socinians: and is in effect to say to them, Since you will not be of our Faction, pray renounce the Trinity in the Godhead, the Divinity & Satisfaction of our Saviour, &c. which is a very charitable design in a pretended Catholick: and shews what want of Arguments there is amongst such Disputers, when they are forced to use such desperate methods of reasoning. The methods some use to support the Infallibility of their Church is yet more desperate; I mean theirs, who use all possible endeavours to ruine the Authority of Scriptures; except we will build it on the Roman Infallibility; which is to persuade, as much as in them lies, all that doubt of that Infallibility, that is, four parts in five of Christians, to reject the Scriptures, and turn Atheists or Deists. By the like desperate attempt some endeavour to defend Transubstantiation: and use all their Wit and Skill to make the Trinity and Incarnation seem as absurd as it: which is very uncharitably to give Premises to weak or prejudiced people, whence they will probably infer, that all three are alike false. 'Tis easie to give innumerable examples of their proceeding in this mischievous destructive way: and

nothing is more common, than to find them turning themselves into all shapes, personating men of the most wicked Principles, and enforcing their Arguments. Thus the former Author acts a *Socinian*, the Author of the single Sheet acts the *Seeker*; the Compiler of the *Letter from a Dissenter to a Church of England Man* acts a *Nonconformist*: the Author of *Pax Vobis* a *Latitudinarian*. And generally their Arguments tend rather to justify Atheists, Deists, Schismatics and Hereticks, than to defend themselves.

§ 2. We have a fresh Example of this in a late Paper which pretends to shew the *Vanity of this Opinion, That every mans Sense and Reason is to guide him in matters of Faith*; but it endeavours in earnest to shew that Christianity dares not stand the Test of Sense and Reason; that all Religions have equal pretences to them, and that we must either take our Religion without examining it, or never expect to arrive at any certainty in it; which is so enormous a Scandal and Blasphemy against our *Reasonable Service*, that I know not if any Heathen ever vented a greater. And if the Author could be suspected to design any thing, we might justly conclude, his design was to undermine Christianity. But the best of it is, that we may see from this, that he was not guided by Sense and Reason when he forsook our Religion, and that our Cause must stand or fall with these by his own Confession. The truth is, he gives us reason to suspect that he is conscious to himself, that he has been baffled by these in his late attempts to justify his New Church: and therefore he declines their Judgment. His Answerer put it home to him twice, to tell us, by what other Faculties besides Sense and Reason a man should choose his Church or Religion, and we may well believe him posed by the Question, since he has not given any Answer to it. He was of another Religion, and now is a R. C. Either he changed without choosing, or he chose without Sense or Reason; and now, to justify himself, he would fain persuade others to use the same irrational method. If he can prevail with the world, to abandon their Sense and Reason, I confess, he has gone a great way to make them R. C. for these are the principal obstacles lie in their way; and no man ever fell out with these, that did not believe they were against him. One thing in his Paper deserves Commendation; which is, that it is excellently suited to the Design, and there is as little Sense or Reason in it, as he would have men use in the Choice of their Religion.

§ 3. The best effect his Paper can have, is, to put us on shewing how far

far Protestants make Sense and Reason their Guides in matters of Faith, and that will appear in these following Propositions.

1. It is to be granted, that we have some Faculties and Powers in our Souls, whereby we judge of things, and manage the affairs of Life.

2. These Faculties are only our Senses and Reason, I may confidently affirm this, since the Author of the Paper which I Answer has not been able to shew any other, though put to it by two solemn and publick Challenges in Print. Now though we find many Imperfections in these Faculties, yet having no other Power or Faculty in our Souls whereby to correct them, nor any other to which we may trust, we are obliged to believe that they will not deceive us when we have as far, as we can, carefully, modestly, and with Invocation of Gods assistance examined things by them; and therefore in such things as come under their Cognizance every one may be assured, that when he thus uses them they will not deceive him, or if they should deceive him, God will not impute that mistake to him as a Crime.

3. By these Faculties we discover this World to have had a beginning, and that beginning not to have been from Chance, but from a Wise and Powerful Being, whom we call God.

4. As God makes use of our Senses and Reason only to discover his Being to us; so he uses the same, and no other Faculties in us to discover to us his Will: Whether that Will be made known by Nature or positive Revelation. All Revelation therefore, as well as natural Knowledge, supposes our Sense and Reason, when rightly employed and allowed to satisfy themselves by a due Examination, to be certain, and such as cannot deceive us. And since these Faculties are weak, and we find by Experience that they are not able to discover by their own natural strength the means of our happiness, or contrive ways to compass it; we ought to believe that God will supply their natural defects by the assistance of his Grace, if we humbly ask it of him, and use all means prescribed by him to attain it.

5. This certainty of Sense and Reason is such, that God has for our own particular concern given us no other final Judge in the most important affairs of Life, Government and Religion. I have no other final Judge to determine for me, whether I shall believe that there is a God, but my own Sense and Reason; nor have I any other final Judge to determine whether God has a Church on Earth, or which is that Church besides them. Nay which is a Demonstration of this Truth, our Saviour appealed to no other Judge whether he was the *Messias*, but to every

ry private Man's Sense and Reason; we have no other means to discover who ought to govern us, or to distinguish our Governour from another Man, but by our Sense and Reason: and in all the important affairs of Life, the Judgment and Information of other Men may serve to assist and help our Sense and Reason; but these must whether we will or no pass the last and determining Sentence for us. And since they must be trusted in these great affairs, we may securely depend on them in the lesser: And it is plainly at our Peril, if we mistake through Prejudice, Passion, or want of Examination.

6. God has left us his Will for our Instruction, with sufficient plainness to those who will use all proper means to understand it, in those Books he has caused to be transmitted to us, which we call the Bible. The Contents of which Books being at first revealed to Men, and the Books conveyed to us by the means of our Senses and Reason, are likewise to be understood and interpreted by them, at least, no meaning ought to be put on any Word or Sentence in them, which is contrary to either Sense or Reason: for we are more certain of what we See, and Hear, and know on due Examination, than we are of the meaning of any place in the Bible.

7. There are many things that do not immediately fall under the Cognizance of our Senses or Reason; but we come to the Knowledge of them by the Information of other People, and what we thus know by the Information of other People, we are said to believe.

8. In this case our Sense and Reason are Judges of the possibility of the thing related to us, and likewise of the credibility of the persons that informs us. If therefore the thing appears to have nothing impossible in it; (that is, if it do not contradict our own Sense or Reason,) and the person that informs us be Credible; (that is, Knowing and Honest,) Sense and Reason tells us, that we ought to believe them. Whence it appears that Faith is founded upon, and supposes the Truth of our Senses and Reason. And though we are not able to judge always of the Reason of the *Thing* we believe, yet we ought to be satisfied that it is not contrary to our Reason and Senses, and we ought to have good Reason to believe it.

9. The Articles of our Faith have nothing in them, that upon full Examination contradicts our Senses or Reason; and the Persons who revealed them to us were most credible, and such as our Reason assures us ought to be believed: Therefore we ought to believe the Articles of

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our Faith, though they fall not under the immediate Cognizance of our Sense and Reason.

10. As God has transmitted to us his Will in Writing, so he appointed a certain Set of Men to be publick Teachers of what is contained in those Books: and these Teachers are the Governours and Bishops of the Church, whom God has promised to assist and preserve, as long as they *Love him and keep his Commandments*, John 14. 15.

11. These Governours have as much Power to interpret and apply Scripture, as Kings and Magistrates have to interpret and apply the Laws of Nature; and every one ought to be Dutiful and Obedient to them at his peril: which is all the Security Princes have, or can have of the Obedience of their Subjects. He that values not his Life, or is so certain that his Governour commands him what he ought not to obey, that he dares venture his Life on it, needs not fear the Power of the Magistrate: And so likewise he who values not his Soul, or is so certain that his Spiritual Governour commands him what he ought not to obey, or teaches him what he ought not to believe, that he dares venture his Salvation on it, needs not fear the Power of his Bishop. And as every Man is a Judge, whether the Laws of his Country require any thing contrary to the Laws of God or Nature; and must obey or not obey, as he is perswaded in his mind: So every one is to judge for himself whether the Governours of the Church, whereof he is a Member, require any thing contrary to the Laws of God or Nature, or impose any Article contrary to the Christian Faith, and must at his Peril Obey or Believe, as he is perswaded in his mind: If he disobey, or disbelieve any thing required by his Governours when they are in the right, it will be no excuse before God to say he was mistaken; and it will as little excuse him, if he obey, or believe any thing against the Christian Law or Faith, to say his Governours required him to do it. The reason is plain, because it is only the Law of God that obliges us to obey or submit to Governours; and the same is the rule and measure of that Submission: and therefore we must know that Law before we submit to them, and that in such a degree that we must regulate our submission by it, except we have a mind to contradict the Apostles rule of obeying God rather than Men. It concerns therefore every Man as he tenders his Salvation to study and understand the Law of God, and to examine his Faith and Religion with such diligence, seriousness, and impartiality, that he may be able before God to vouch his Sincerity; he who doth so, and none else is excusable before God, if he mistake.

C H A P. II.

§ 1. **H**AVING premised these, it is very easie to Answer this Paper, in which there is not one Argument against our being guided by Sense and Reason, but is obviated by thus stating and declaring our Doctrine: And had not the Author a great Confidence that none of his own Party read our Answers he could hardly be supposed to have had the Face to publish these things anew, after he had received a particular Answer to every one of them more than once, without taking the least notice of those Answers. If it were necessary, I could point out the page and line, where he objected the most material things in this Paper thrice before, and where he was answered. If those Answers were defective he ought to have shewn where that defect lay. But he knew very well, that the partiality of his own party, who read only what is written on one side, secures him from a Discovery; and hence he has the Confidence to obtrude the same things again and again on the World, as if no body had ever given him an Answer. And now he objects them the fourth time, they are as loose and undigested, as if they had never past his thoughts before; insomuch, that it is a harder task to range them in Order than Answer them. I will bring them to the best method I can, which I think is this.

§ 2. First to consider what he seems to design for Arguments to shew, that every Mans Sense and Reason is not to guide him in matters of Faith.

2. The Answers he gives the Protestant Arguments for Sense and Reason.

3. The Objections against our Reformers.

And 4. His Apology for his Roman Catholicks and Church.

His first Argument to shew that every Mans Sense and Reason is not to guide him in Matters of Faith, is from St. *Augustines* Book *de Utilitate Credendi*, which he wrote against the *Manichees*. Which Book, I take it for granted, this Gentleman never read, since he so grossly mistakes and misrepresents the design of it; which is not to shew the incapacity of most men to discern betwixt true Reason and the Appearance of it; and how Christians are therefore bound to believe one Holy and Apostolick Church, as he would perswade us. But it is to prove against the

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Manichees, that we are obliged to believe many things that we never saw: and that the *Manichees*, who laugh at the Catholick Christians for asserting this, acted against the Dictates of their Senses and Reason. But that St. *Augustine* teaches us to believe *one Catholick and Apostolick Church*, or any Authority whatsoever, against the Dictates of our Senses or Reason, or further than these tell us that we ought to believe, is one of the Flowers of this Paper, that is a downright falshood.

But suppose St. *Augustine* had taught us to believe one Catholick and Apostolick Church against our Senses and Reason (which is manifestly false,) what is this against Protestants, who embrace all that the Catholick Apostolick Church teaches, and reject the Innovations of the Church of *Rome*, meerly because the Catholick Apostolick Church did not teach them? Must he not have a large stock of Confidence, that dares pretend, that the present Catholick Church (not to speak of the Apostolick) taught the Popes Supremacy, half Communion, Purgatory, Indulgences, Seven Sacraments, Prayers in an unknown Tongue, or Transubstantiation, when the Reformation began?

The much greater part of Christians never believed or taught any thing of these: and he knows very little of the World, that must go to *O Brazeel*, the *Isle of Pines*, or *New Atlantis*, to find these Catholick Christians as this Paper would perswade us.

§ 3. His second Argument is from our Saviours saying to St. *Thomas*, *Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed*, John 20. 29. It is hard to say how this makes against every mans Sense and Reason being Guides in matters of Faith. I wish the Author would do what perhaps he never did in his life, that is, put his Arguments in form, and see how they would agree with the Rules of Reasoning, before he put them in Print. This Argument, if it be any thing, must be thus; He is blessed that believes, though he have not seen our Saviour: therefore every mans Sense and Reason is not to guide him in matters of Faith. But a Protestant will tell him, that his Sense and Reason oblige him to believe many things which he never saw, and the manner of whose being he can by no means comprehend; and therefore he may be guided by his Sense and Reason: and notwithstanding that, nay, the more probably be one of the *blessed that have not seen, and yet have believed*.

§ 4. His third Argument is from *Ruffinus*, l. 1. c. 3. where we are told of a Philosopher, who disputed in the Council of *Nice*, and was convinced by a plain simple man, who recited his Belief, and asked the Philosopher

if he believed it : therefore every man is not to be guided by his Sense or Reason.

Now to this I answer, That all that the plain man did in this case was, to put it home to the Philosophers Conscience, and oblige him to give a direct answer, whether he believed the Christian Faith : to which Question so put, the Philosopher answered, that he did believe it. Whence we may conjecture that the plain man perceived that the Philosopher did not believe himself when he opposed Christianity ; and therefore the plain man put the Question to him, which touch'd his Conscience, so that he durst not any longer deny his Conviction, or tell a Lye before that venerable Assembly. Now if we take the Story thus, it makes nothing against a mans being guided by his Sense and Reason. For it was the Philosophers Sense and Reason that convinced him of the Truth of Christianity, though the plain mans Question touch'd his Conscience, and obliged him to own that Conviction. But if we imagine that the *plain recital of the Faith* did by the inward Operation of the Holy Ghost on his Heart convince him at that very instant. I answer either every man is to expect such an inward Operation, or he is not to expect it : if he is to expect it, why doth not this Paper set down the Creed ; and leave it to the Holy Ghost to convince men, without troubling them with these pretences to Reason which he here offers ? If every man is not to expect such an Operation from Gods holy Spirit, why is this miraculous Conversion made a Precedent for the generality of men ? or how comes this Example to prove that *Sense and Reason*, which are the usual means Gods Spirit uses for our Conviction, are *vain*, and *no fit Guides* ? But lastly, suppose the Recital of the Christian Faith did convince this Philosopher. It is to be considered, that this was the plain, simple and most reasonable Catholick Faith, that contained in it nothing contrary to Sense or Reason : nothing that looked like an Artifice or Instrument of Ambition or Gain to the Professors : and no wonder if such a Faith, delivered by a Confessor, had a mighty influence on reasonable honest men. If Christians had been content with such a Faith, it is probable they had been much more numerous and united this day. But the Faith delivered by the plain man, and received by the Philosopher, will not satisfy our pretended Catholicks : They must add to their Faith the *gainful Articles* of Purgatory and Indulgences, the *absurd Doctrine* of Transubstantiation, the ambitious Doctrine of the Supremacy of the Church and Pope of *Rome*, and an universal Approbation of all their absurd and ridiculous

Practices and Constitutions. And yet after all, if they will but prove that they *received* these from Christ, or his Apostles, we will be silent. But there needs no other Demonstration, (whatever this Paper pretend) that they have not *delivered* what they *received*, than the Faith recited by the plain man in that Council, which had not one of the *Trent* Articles; these were then unknown to the World, much less were they believed to be any part of the Christian Faith.

§ 5. His fourth Argument to prove the vanity of trusting *Sense and Reason* to guide us in *Matters of Faith*, is from the practice of wise Protestants in matters relating to their *Temporal Estates*, in which they are not usually very confident of their own Reason, but in matters of Faith not obvious to *Humane Sense or Apprehension*; 'tis strange how every one thinks it his wisest course to follow his own Judgment of Discretion. Now if Protestants be generally taught not to trust their Judgment of Discretion so much in matters of Faith, which are not obvious to Humane Sense as in matters of their Estate, then this Objection will appear to be a meer falshood and slander; and his remark of their being *so diffident of their own reason and so apt to submit to other Mens advice about the security of their Estates, and so negligent in matter of their Souls* will fall under the same Censures and must be added to his many other mistakes in matter of Fact: Now to make this appear, let me observe,

First, That Protestants generally are not very confident in Matters of Faith, that are not obvious to Humane Sense; and therefore they take it very ill of Roman Catholicks when they go about to parallell the difficulties that occur in the Mysteries of the Trinity (which is a matter of Faith not obvious to Humane Sense,) with the Absurdities of Transubstantiation, which is a matter obvious, nay contrary to Humane Sense, and therefore can be no matter of Faith: and their usual Answer in this case, is, that they are obliged to believe honest and knowing Men concerning places and things they never saw; but if all the World should Swear to them a thing contrary to their own Senses and continual experience, they would not think themselves obliged to believe them, which is the very difference between the Trinity and Transubstantiation.

§ 6. But secondly, when a Protestant goes to a Lawyer he carries his Judgment of Discretion along with him, as well, or rather more than when he goes to a Divine; and does not look on himself obliged blindly to follow any Man's Advice: If he should, he knows that he might fall into a Premunire, or under the Censure of the Law; and that it would be no excuse or

security for him to plead that he followed the Direction of his Lawyers: The Court would Over Rule that Plea, and tell him that the Law supposes that he ought to know his Duty: and therefore every Lawyer who would have his Client trust him, gives his Opinion, together with the Reason and Laws on which it is founded, and the Client is left to his Discretion to believe or follow it. If a factious, interested, or ignorant Lawyer should advise a Man to Rebel against his Prince, or to Burn his Evidences for his Estate, or never look into, or not plead them; he would be lookt on as a Fool, who would follow such advice. And the Case is the same between a Man and his Spiritual Guides in any matter of doubt: they are bound to give their Opinion, and their Reasons; but if out of Ignorance, Interest, Prejudice, or Faction, they advise a Man contrary to the Christian Law, or Faith; their advising will no more excuse us before God, if we blindly follow them, than the Opinion of such Lawyers will excuse us before a Temporal Judge. And the Reason is the same, we are as much obliged to know the Divine Laws and Faith, as the Laws of our Country. And it is wilful Ignorance, if by the persuasion of any, or by trusting to the judgment of any, we violate them.

§ 7. But thirdly, Neither Protestants nor R. C.'s think it any *immodesty* to believe themselves in a Matter they certainly know: though Judge, Jury, and Witnesses, nay and a Parliament have determined against them. If all the World should determine a Man to be guilty of Murder that knows himself Innocent he would not think himself obliged to believe them. Nor doth any reasonable Man blame a person for vouching his Innocency, though never so solemnly condemned. If all the World determine a Cause against the plain Laws of Nature, no body thinks himself obliged to concur with the common Opinion: and Men generally are so far from thinking themselves obliged to this, that on the contrary they wait till they can bring their Cause to a new Hearing before more favourable Judges; and they often obtain a Reversion of the former Sentence, after many Juries, Judges, nay and Parliaments have determined against them. And then, why ought not Men to be allowed the same Liberty in Religion? And what more *immodesty* is there in trusting ones self in what he feels, and sees, and knows in matter of Religion than in matters of Property; though partial, or ignorant Judges have determined against him. More especially this Liberty may justly be challenged when those Judges do declare before hand, that they will not be guided by *Sense and Reason*.

§ 8. His fifth Argument to shew the vanity of every Man's Sense and Reason being Judge in Matters of Faith, is, that the *Opinion* of these is the root of all *Schism and Heresie*, and that unless they are governed by the Grace of God, that is, with *Humility and Charity*, they run as naturally into *Schism, Heresie and Rebellion*, as a Cockatrice Egg into a Serpent. To which I Answer, that if we suppose this true, yet it doth not shew, that we are not to be guided by Sense and Reason : On the contrary, it rather shews that these are our Guides, whose Corruption will be most fatal to us ; and therefore we ought to be careful, lest we suffer Prejudice, Passion, or Interest to corrupt these *Guides* given us by God.

But secondly, I will discover a secret to this Gentleman, which perhaps he did not know before ; and that is, whoever follows the Guidance of Sense and Reason in good earnest, can never want either Humility, or Charity : Nor can we expect a greater benefit from the Grace of God in this Life than to follow these Guides without declining in any thing from them.

§ 9. But 3. His affirming the Opinion of our own Sense and Reason to be the Root of all Schism and Heresie, is a palpable mistake in matter of Fact ; since the greatest Schisms and Heresies that have been in the World, have proceeded from other Originals ; that is, from Interest, Passion, and Ambition. *Diotrephes* made a Schism, not because he had a great Opinion of his own Sense and Reason, but because he loved the Preheminence. *Simon Magus* began the first Heresie in the Church, not because he had a great Opinion of his own Sense or Reason ; (for he knew himself to be an Impostor, and was self-condemned :) But because he would be the head of a Party, and Rival our Saviour. The like may be said of *Mahomet* : Who, next to this Gentleman and his Partizans, seems to have had the greatest enmity to Sense and Reason, and to have taken the greatest care to recommend an implicate Faith and blind Obedience. The same may be said of most great Ringleaders of Factions, Schisms and Heresies. Where one of these have been engaged by a great Opinion of their own Sense or Reason ; ten have been engaged by Interest, Ambition, or Revenge. So far is the Writer of this Paper from assigning the true Root of all Schisms and Heresies.

§ 10. But 4. The true reason of the opposition Christianity met in the World, and that it still meets, is imputable to nothing so much as to Mens Lazyness, Prejudice, and Diffidence of their own Sense and Reason. Men were, and are unwilling to allow it a fair Hearing: it would cost them

too much pains to examine it impartially: and when they have done it they dare not trust their own Sense and Reason, against the Authority of their Governours; the Sense of their Teachers, the Prejudices of their Birth and Education, and Religion of their Forefathers and Country. If Men would lay aside their value for these, and prefer the Dictates of plain Sense and unprejudiced Reason to them, the whole World would soon turn Christian, and till they do it, there is little hope of it. It was a great part of the business of the first Defenders of Christianity to shew men the unreasonableness of being guided by these, and to persuade them to undervalue them, in respect of what their own Sense and Reason then assured them to be true. But 'tis remarkable that this Gentleman strikes in with Heathens and Turks, and in opposition to the first Apologists for Christianity would fain persuade us not to be guided by Sense and Reason, the true Friends of our Religion; but to trust to our Teachers. So different is his method from that whereby Christ and his Apostles convinced all the World.

§ 11. His sixth Argument against every Mans being guided by his Sense and Reason in Matters of Faith, is taken from some Texts of Scripture; which he has confusedly cast together; they are *Job* 11. 12. *Proverbs* 3. 5, 7. and 26. 12. *Eccles.* 7. 23. *Isa.* 5. 21. *Rom.* 12. 16. *1 Cor.* 8. 3. and 13. 8. Now who shall be Judge whether these Texts make against our following Sense and Reason? If every Man for himself, then after All, every Man is judge for himself, whether he will or no. But if the Collector of these passages, will have us trust the Judgment of other people, let him tell us by what Faculties shall a Man choose his Judge; if by his Sense and Reason, then after all, these finally guide and determine him, and judge even his Judge.

But secondly, If these places of Scripture are agreeable to Sense and Reason, then a Man may be guided by them, without contradicting these Scriptures: If they are not agreeable to a Mans Sense and Reason, then he must Judge them Nonsensical and Unreasonable. But he may assure himself that the Sense and Reason of Protestants do not guide them to such Blasphemy: There have been people in the World that have called the Scriptures, a *Nose of Wax*, an *unsensed Character*, a *dead Letter*, and have judged them too pernicious Tools to be trusted into the hands of the generality of Christians. But these were no Protestants, nor did Sense or Reason guide them to such Censures.

But thirdly, all that these places of Scripture prove, is, That a Man ought

ought to use his Reason with much caution, diligence, and modesty, and to this true Reason guides a man as well as Scripture: and, I hope, we may advise a Judge to behave himself thus in a great and weighty concern, without taking the Power of Judging from him: and so the Scriptures may advise a man thus to use his Sense and Reason without taking the Power of Guiding us from them.

§ 12. His seventh Argument is, that if every man be allowed to choose his Church and Religion by his Sense and Reason, then *this is a good Plea for all Schism and Herefie, for Socinianism, Independency, Anabaptism, nay, for Roman Catholicks too, and justifies the Liberty of every mans Reason to take up what Church or Religion he likes best.* To which I answer, that if this Objecter will vouch for all these Sectaries, that they are guided meerly by their Sense & Reason in their Choice of their Religion, without any thing of Interest, Prejudice or Passion, I think he has gone a great way to make a good Plea for them, and such as, I hope, may excuse them before God: for such people have plainly done their best to find out the Truth; and if they miss of it, their Ignorance is invincible, and even amongst Romanists that is allowed a good Plea. And this doth in deed justifie the liberty of every mans Reason to take up what Church or Religion he likes best, if by *likes* he means judges *best*; for he is certainly inexcusable that takes any Church or Religion that he doth not judge best, or takes them up for any other reason, but because he judges them to be so. And whereas he infers *that then Roman Catholicks are as justifiable, at least, as any other Church,* I answer, If Roman Catholicks have examined their Church and Religion by the Rules of Sense and Reason as diligently, disinterestedly and unprejudicely as other people, they are as justifiable. But I think this needs a little proof, before we believe it: for I think they will neither allow their People to examine their Religion, nor to be guided by their own Sense and Reason in their choice. But, says he, *if this be allowed, there can be no such crimes as Schism or Herefie in the world; because, forsooth, you shall never find any body in the wrong.* To which I answer, that Schisms and Heresies are crimes, not as they are mistakes in mens Judgments, but as those mistakes proceed from Passion, Interest, Ambition, Negligence, or some other vicious habit of the mind. And although men be allowed to be guided by their Sense and Reason, yet they may refuse to follow these, and fall into Factious or pernicious Errors, through some of the former motives, and then their Errors are Crimes. And our Church had great reason to pray God, that he would so streng-

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then the Sense and Reason of her members, that they might not through weakness fall into *false Doctrine*, and so clear and purifie their Souls from all vicious inclinations that might withdraw them from the Dictates of Sense and Reason, that they might not fall into *Schism* or *Heresie*. And whereas he urges, that if men be allowed this liberty, *you shall never find any one in the wrong*: this is a manifest falshood, and contrary to the experience of the world, since thousands have been brought in all ages to acknowledge their mistakes by the force of Truth. No good man, who in earnest gives himself up to be guided by Sense and Reason, can continue long in a gross Error, if he be rightly managed.

§ 13. But secondly, this Argument supposes that all Men pretend to Sense and Reason with equal Justice and Honesty, which is manifestly false. If then a Man pretend to be guided by Sense and Reason when he really is not, why ought his dishonest and unjust Pretences to hinder an honest, just, diligent and impartial Searcher into Truth from judging according to his Sense and Reason? I hope he will not say, that whatever another may pretend, though never so unjustly for himself, ought not to be allowed as an Argument for a Church. For there is not one Argument for any Religion, but other Religions have pretended to it. Many pretend to an *Infallible Spirit* as well as the Church of *Rome*; many pretend to Tradition and Miracles as well as Christians; must not these therefore be allowed to be Evidences for Christianity? Ask a *Grecian*, *Turk*, or *Heathen*, why they are of the Religion they profess, and they will tell you that their Forefathers recommended that Religion to them: That their Teachers assure them, that they received it from God: and for their own part, they dare not allow themselves to dispute, or new Examine a Religion recommended to them by so sacred an Authority. Now I would desire to know how a R. C. would go about to convince such Men without perswading them to trust their own Sense and Reason, before all Authority. Which is directly to destroy their own Plea against Protestants, and to acknowledge that their method to convince such as are not of their Communion, is the same that they condemn in Protestants: And the methods whereby they defend themselves against Protestants is the very same which Turks and Heathens use against them. That is, they condemn and use a Plea meerly as it serves their Interest.

But thirdly, this Plea will not justify all Sects, because all neither do nor can pretend to it. Several Sects and whole parties of Men, such as
some

some R. Cs. and Enthusiasts declare against being guided by their own Sense and Reason, and absolutely refuse to stand to their Judgment. I hope these Mens Pretences are not the same with Protestants.

§ 14. His eighth Argument, is, That if every Man ought to be guided by his own Sense and Reason, and be allowed his *Judgment of Discretion*; then if a *Sectarian Preacher*, or *little Shopkeepers Judgment* happen to *contradict the Judgment of Direction which belongs to the chief Pastors or Bishops of the Church*, and they be not obliged to *pin their Religion on the Churches sleeve*, there will be no way to convince such; nor ought they to be blamed, because they *cannot see with our Eyes, or understand as we do*. To this I answer, Either this Preacher or Shopkeeper is modest, diligent, and willing to learn of his Pastor, or he is rash, heady and opinionative. If the first, the Reasons given him by his Pastors in things of moment will convince him in all Probability: And for matters of lesser moment, he will be content to enjoy his own Opinion, without making a Schism in the Church: And this Gentleman has not given us one Example, nor will I believe be able to give one. Where a Man that gave due attention to his Pastors Reasons, and was willing to learn the Truth has mist it, so far as to fall into Schism or Heresie; but if any one be heady, rash, opinionative, and will not give due attention, or use the means God has afforded him to find out the Truth, God has provided no way for the conviction of such, nor is he obliged to prevent Mens falling into Error through wilfulness or negligence, more than their falling into any other wilful Sin. A man that has a mind to err, or will not be at the pains to seek Truth, may err (as I take) it in all Churches. The only way God has prescribed to deal with such men is, That the Governors of the Church, after the first or second Admonition, should reject them. Some of the Roman Church prescribe indeed three other ways, the first is debarring them the use of their Senses and Reason in matters of Faith: The second is to debar them the use of the Scriptures: And the third is to pin their *Faith on their Teachers Sleeves*; but he has been told long ago that we reckon Schisms and Heresies, which our Saviour taught us to expect in the Church, a much lesser Evil than any of these Remedies. I must add, that it may be suspected that this Gentleman has met some *little Shop keeper* that has been too hard for him at Sense and Reason, on some of his Churches new Points of Faith. And hence it is, that he falls foul both on the Man and Instrument that worsted him. I think I have examined all that looketh like an Argument on this Head.

C H A P. III.

§ 1. I Shall now proceed to the second thing in this Paper, and that is, The Answer he gives to the Protestants Arguments for their taking Sense and Reason for their guide: Amongst many produced by them in this Cause he takes notice only of one, p. 3. and that is, *Roman Catholicks themselves being demanded why they embrace this Church rather than that? their answer is, Because they judge this Church to have good authority, and that none; which is to draw the matter to their own judgment.* Is this the R. Cs. Answer or is it not? if it be, it plainly yields the Cause: if it be not, Why did not this Gentleman substitute the true Roman Catholick Answer that we might have seen it? the Question has been put to him several times, but he has hitherto declined it: and he did wisely, since it is capable of no other Answer, of which a rational man would not be ashamed: for either R. Cs. take up their Religion and Church by Judgment and Choice, which is the thing we contend they ought to do: or by meer Chance, or on some unaccountable impulse pretended from Gods Spirit: And let them choose which of these they please, they must acknowledge, that they either choose their Church, because they judge it to have the best Authority, or took it by chance, or were guided to it by Inspiration. The first of these, is the way our Saviour taught the World; who askt his Hearers, why of themselves they did not judge right? of the other two ways of resolving Faith R. Cs. may choose which they please.

§ 2. Now though this Answer alledged by Protestants, be that which is owned by the most seditious R. Cs. and though the Writer of this Letter has given us no other; yet he resolves it shall not pass, and therefore he falls a disputing against it. *If this Answer be right, says he, is not this a good Plea for all Schism and Heresie?* It seems then the only Answer R. Cs. give to this Question, why are you of the Roman Church, rather than another? is a Plea for all Hereticks. One would suspect that by this, he meant to insinuate that R. Cs. can give no Answer to this Question at all. And that he had a secret design to shew, that they had no Reason at all to be of their Church, and consequently to undermine its Authority with all Rational Men. But I will vouch once for his sincerity, I verily believe it is his shortness of Reason, and not any malicious design of ingratiating

gratiating himself with Protestants that makes him thus betray the Cause of his Church.

3. But secondly, He argues against this Assertion of ours, *that every man takes up his Church or Religion upon the Dictates of his own Reason*, and tells us *that it may be questioned*. To this I answer, 1. That we do not say Every man takes up his Church upon the Dictates of his own Reason; our Assertion is, that every man ought to do so. But there are many men that act so like brutes, that they take up their Church by meer chance, without ever examining or concerning their Reason in their choice; and if his Paper design any thing, 'tis to defend such unreasonable men.

2. Roman Catholicks, who take up their Church because they judge her to have the best Authority, which many, at least, pretend, maintain this Assertion as much as we; and therefore 'tis their Assertion as much as ours.

3. 'Tis no matter whose Assertion 'tis, since he has so little to say against it: He tells us, every man doth not take up his Church upon the Dictates of his own Reason, *because we are received into the Ark of Christs Church — before we come to the use of Reason*; that is, we cannot choose our Church before we can use our Reason: therefore we ought not to choose when we can use it. Profoundly argued, I confess; but the rest of the proof is yet more pleasant; which is this, The Church when we come to the use of Reason requires us in *Confirmation* to consent to the same things that were ——— vowed in *Baptism*: therefore our Church doth not allow us to choose by Reason. Now this Argument is so far from proving what he intends, that it proves the direct contrary, and shews that our Church thinks it necessary that mens owning the Religion of their Fathers should be an act of choice in them, and that every one should declare that choice as soon as he is able to make it. Suppose a man baptised by his Parents into an Heretical Church, I would ask this Writer, whether such a person ought to consent to this Church or Faith, or whether he ought to quit them? If he ought to quit them, how shall he do it without choosing a new Church? and by what means shall he choose that Church besides Sense and Reason?

But Fourthly. He objects, That *Christ having no more Churches but one ——— there can be no such choice of Churches, or Religions, as this Answer seems to suppose*. To this I answer, That there may be several Societies who pretend to be that one Church, and then how shall a man find the true from the false without judging and choosing? Secondly. Suppose there were but one Church in the World pretended to be Ca-

tholick, which is manifestly false; yet a man ought not to profess himself a member of it till he judged and were convinced by his Sense and Reason that its Faith is true, and its Pretences real. Thirdly, By the Passions and Folly, or Weakness of the Governours of the several parts of the one Catholick Church of Christ, several Schisms and different Communions have happen'd amongst the members of this Catholick Church, without any fault in the people; and in such a manner, that it was not in their power to prevent it. Now whatever Roman Catholics pretend, I suppose, at present, that several of these divided Societies may remain parts of the one Catholick Church, tho not equally pure; and if so, must not a man use his Sense and Reason to find out that which is most agreeable to the Institution of our common Master? 4. There are several Religions in the World besides the Christian; and, I suppose, every man some time in his life puts the question to himself, whether he should be a Christian or no: and therefore there must be a *Choice* both of *Churches* and *Religions*, whatever this Letter supposes. But it is to little purpose to answer a man so unacquainted with the Rules of Discourse, that he knows not when he should answer, or when he ought to argue. He ought here to have answered the Protestant Objection; but instead of that he falleth a proving against R. Cs. that they do not answer Protestants right: so little doth he seem to know either his Business or his Adversaries.

CHAP. IV.

§ 1. **T**He third thing observable in his Paper, is, his Objections against the Reformers. It were a reasonable Question to a man that used to think or write coherently, to ask how these Objections are pertinent to shew the *Vanity* of the *Opinion*, that every mans *Sense* and *Reason* is to guide him in matters of Faith. Suppose the first Reformers were faulty, their fault must be, if they had any, their deviating in some particular from Sense and Reason: If they were entirely guided by these, we are sure they were honest men, and acted according to their Conscience, and have all the reason in the world to suppose they were not mistaken. If they were not guided by these, then this gives a reasonable account of their mistakes, and shews the necessity of sticking close to the guidance of these, if a man would be secure from Error: so take it as he will, all that he says against the first Reformers is impertinent, and proceeds

ceeds from an ill habit he has given himself of railing against them on all occasions, instead of reasoning against what they established. All that he says here has been twice answered in other Papers, and till he confutes those Answers that have been made to him, his repeating the same things in the same words deserves no consideration. However I will give them what they ought not to pretend to, that is, a new Examination.

§ 2. First therefore he objects, that the Reformers were very immodest, because they *censured the whole Christian world* in their Articles; in one of which they say, *That as the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred, so also hath the Church of Rome.* He would do well to prove as strongly, as he condemns confidently, the Immodesty of this Article. Have the Churches of *Jerusalem, &c.* erred, or have they not? if they have not, why doth the Church of *Rome* curse and damn them as Hereticks. But if these Apostolick Churches, in which not only *St. Peter*, but Christ himself presided, have erred not only in matters of Ceremony, but also in matters of Faith; What good reason is there why the Church of *Rome* may not err as well as they? But it seems it was modest in the Church of *Rome* to anathematise and condemn to Hell three fourths of the Flock of Christ, meerly because they would not submit to her Commands, contrary to the Tradition and Sense of their Ancestors: and yet it was not modest in the Reformers to free themselves from her Usurpations.

§ 3. But secondly. He objects, that the first Reformers did *damn all the Christian world*, and that *by virtue of their Judgment of Discretion they did attain all Christendom of damnable Idolatry for the space of 800 years and more.* All that he brings to prove this, is a passage in our Homilies, in which it is said, *Not the Sheep, but also the Shepherds themselves — as blind guides of the blind, fell both into the pit of damnable Idolatry, in which all the world, as it were drowned, continued until our age by the space of above 800 years, unspoken against in a manner, Homil. against Idol. 3d part.* From whence he would infer, that the Reformers damned all the Christian world for 800 years. To which I answer, first, that all R. Cs. are not of a mind in this point. *T. G.* in his Answer to *Dr. St.* will not allow our Homilies to speak the Sense of our Church in this particular, and then our first Reformers cannot be concluded to condemn the Christian world, notwithstanding this Homily. But I allow the Homily to speak their Sense; and therefore I say in the second place, that this passage doth not prove that they damned all the Christian world. Which will appear, if we consider,

sider, that by all the worlds being *drowned as it were, and continuing in Idolatry*, is not meant all Christians; for *all the world* is an usual phrase to signifie a great many; so St. *Joh. 12.19. behold the World is gone after him*, say the Pharisees of our Saviour, that is, a great many; and no phrase is more usual than this. If I should say, all the world must see this Writer is mistaken in putting this invidious Sense on this Homily, every candid Reader would understand that I meant no more than that the generality of those who read him would perceive his disingenuity. When St. *Jerom* says, that *the whole world groaned, and wondred that it should become Arian*, no body that understands the History of that time will believe that in earnest all Christians became *Arians*. It is true, the Council of *Ariminum* and *Syrmiun* in the West, the Councils of *Antioch*, *Tyre*, *Seleucia* and *Constantinople* under *Acacius* established *Arianism* in the East, to whom the Pope and greater part of the Bishops consented. But notwithstanding this, the whole world was never guilty of this damnable Heresie: and yet St. *Jerom* said true when he affirmed, that the whole world groaned under it, and that it was become *Arian*; because the greater part of Christians were of that Communion: and so the Homily says true, when it affirms, that *the whole world was as it were drowned in damnable Idolatry*, though neither all Christians nor Churches were involved therein; because the greater part joined in the Communion that was guilty.

§ 4. But thirdly. The Homily speaks not of all Christians, but only of those who embraced the second Council of *Nice*, as is manifest from the words that go before: and so the *Armenian*, *Nestorian* and *Indian* Churches in the East, who never embraced that Council, come not under this Condemnation, nor the *German*, *French* or *English* Churches, who for many ages after rejected that Council and the Worship of Images, and never received them before the Reformation by any authentick Act. That these Eastern Churches never received either that Council or the Worship of Images is plain, from the Accounts we have of their Religion; particularly Father *Simon*, in his Account of the Religion of the Eastern Christians. chap. 8. vouches for the *Caldean* and *Indian* Churches, and shews us, that the poor people that lived in *India* were by force, and violence used by the *Portugezes* and *Roman* Emisseries, obliged to receive Images, amongst other Innovations of *Rome*, about the year 1599. and not before: and he determines, that their Cotiverters *might very well have let the Christians of St. Thomas alone in their ancient simplicity, because all that hath been since that time* (he means since their Conversion) *decreed concerning Images,*

Images, is but barely matter of Discipline. If it be objected that these Christians were Hereticks, he tells us, *ch. 7.* that their *Hereſie was only imaginary.* And as ſo conſiderable a part of the Eaſtern Churches rejected that Council, and continued free from Image Worſhip; ſo the Weſtern Church did univerſally reject it, and condemn the ſecond Council of *Nice* that eſta- bliſhed it. The Council of *Frankford* conſiſting of three hundred Biſhops condemned both in the year 794. The *French* Church condemned it in a Council held at *Paris*, *an. 824.* and *an. 825.* And ſo did moſt learned Men of that Age; and we are aſſured, that the *German, French, and Engliſh* Churches continued for ſome Ages after in their Opinion, that Images were not to be worſhipped: And eſteemed the Council of *Nice*, that determi- ned that Worſhip to be a falſe Council: in ſo much, that the *Germans* in the 12th Century are obſerved for their not allowing the Worſhip of Ima- ges; ſo we learn from *Nicetas Coniates, lib. 2. de Imp. Aug. Angel, p. 258.* A- mongſt the *Germans and Armenians*, (ſaith he) *the Worſhip of Images is equal- ly forbid.* It was therefore after this, that is, about 300 years before the Reformation, that the Worſhip of Images crept into theſe Churches. In the Eaſt it was introduced by a packt Council, which produced nothing for it but Lies, Counterfit Miracles, Forgeries, Miſtakes and Ignorance: As is plain from the Acts of that Council yet remaining, and from the Censure of the Weſtern Church which condemned it, as appears in the *Ca- roline* Books written at that time, the words of which, I have only repeated. And we are told, that *All Catholicks* approved the Sentence of their Con- demnation, and no wonder ſuch a Council was hateful to all good Chriſtians, ſince it was ſummoned and influenced by a barbarous and wicked Woman the Empreſs *Irene*, who rebelled againſt her Son; depoſed him, and pulled out his Eyes: A fit Patroness for ſuch a Synod, who rebelled againſt the Faith and Tradition of their Forefathers, delivered to them both by Scripture, and univerſal conſent, as the Weſtern Church accuſed them.

This was the Authority introduced Image-Worſhip in the Eaſt, but in the Weſt it had no Authority at all; but came in after a long inter- val, meerly by the Ignorance, Negligence, and Barbariſm of the Ages: The Folly and Rudeneſs of the People prevailing againſt the Scriptures, Councils, and Tradition of their Fathers; in ſo much, that the Practice of Worſhipping Images was come by degrees to its height at the Reforma- tion; and was almoſt become univerſal amongſt thoſe that were in Com- munion with the *Roman* Church. Now, if it was not immodest in *Atha- naſius*

nafus to maintain the Council of *Nice*, notwithstanding both the Eastern and Western Church condemned and excommunicated him ; why should it be counted immodest in the Reformers to defend the Truth, notwithstanding a part of the Church had fallen into a much less Error and Idolatry than the generality of the Church and Church Governours did in *St. Athanasius's* time ? Sure, if the Scripture, Tradition, and Council of *Nice* were sufficient Authority to warrant *Athanasius* to oppose himself to the whole World, Scripture, Tradition and Councils were sufficient Authority for the Reformers to oppose themselves to a general and prevailing Corruption that had no Scripture, Tradition, nor Council, nor any thing but prevailing Custom to support it, till the Council of *Trent* afterwards made it an Article of Faith.

§ 5. But fourthly, the first Reformers did not damn all Christians, because they very well knew, that there were a considerable party in the West that constantly opposed, and stood out against the Corruptions of the Roman Church : Such were the *Albigenses*, and the *Waldenses*, in *France* and *Piedmont*, the *Bohemians* in *Germany*, and the followers of *Wickliff* in *England*. He is a stranger to History, who is ignorant of the cruel Persecutions of these People ; what Armys and Croyado's the Pope and Princes brought together, to destroy them : But it pleased God notwithstanding so many bloody Executions and Massacres to preserve them till the Reformation. But besides these, the Reformers were not ignorant that there was a great party, who kept in the Communion of the *Roman* Church, and neither approved, nor defiled themselves with her Corruptions, but were meerly passive and silent, and kept their Opinion to themselves : And at this day there want not great numbers of such, both in *France* and *Italy*, who would quickly shew their aversion to her Corruptions, as the generality of Christians did at the Reformation, if they could hope to do it with their success.

§ 6. But fifthly, the Reformers did not damn even all those who practised and approved the Idolatry of Images ; much less all *Christendom* : Because they only say, that the Idolatry was *damnable*, not that all who were guilty of it should be damned ; according to the Opinion of Protestants, every Sin is damnable ; that is such, that if Gods Mercy did not interpose, he might in justice condemn the Guilty for it : Such a Sin Idolatry is in a high degree, if Gods Mercy did not interpose in behalf of those, who through ignorance, or mistaken zeal fall into it ; and whatever it be to those who through Willfulness, or culpable Ignorance become

become Guilty, we hope it will not prove mortal to others : This was the first Reformers Judgment, as well as Bp. *Bramhall's*. And whatever this Paper suggests to the contrary, his *Judgment of Discretion* and *Theirs* consist very well together; and neither of them failed in Modesty, or Charity, since neither of them past any other Censure on the Worshipers of Images, than the Council of *Constantinople* in the East; and the Council of *Frankfort* in the West; with *Charles the Great of France*; and the whole Western Church had past upon them near eight hundred years before. And now, I hope, he who preaches up Modesty to others, will ask us no more, by what Authority, or Mission from God did our Reformers damn all the Christian World? Since it is manifest, that they neither damned the Christian World, nor wanted Authority for the Censure they past on the corrupt Practice, that had lately become so universal amongst Christians; and which had as little to plead for it self, as Swearing, Drinking, or Fornication; which were then almost as universally practised as Image-Worship, and might be defended with as good Arguments, and as easie distinctions, if men would give their mind to it.

§ 7. When therefore he objects in the third place, that the Reformers had no Authority, nor Mission, for what they did. I must answer him, that if he had not put on an insensibility above what is common to Humane Nature; he could not put this question anew, till he had said something to the Answers that have been given him. He has been told, that the Scripture is the Commission and Authority of every Christian Bishop, by which he must act at his peril. That the Reformers were Christian Bishops, and acted by that Authority. And that there was not one Doctrine they taught, not one Article or Constitution they made, but it was agreeable to that Authority. That the *Roman* Bishops had no other Commission from Christ, but this, and that if they pretended to any other, it was meer Usurpation. That the Scripture, which is their only Christian Commission, gave them no Authority to teach Transubstantiation, half-Communion, solitary Masses, Purgatory, Invocation of Saints, Worship of Images, or Prayers in an unknown Tongue. Lastly, that they had no Commission from Christ to require people to disbelieve their Senses or Reason, or not to be guided by them, that till they shewed their Commission to teach these Doctrines, no body was bound to mind them; and that therefore the Reformers needed no other Authority to reject and condemn these Doctrines, than that they could not find them in their Commission. Those that teach these Doctrines, that is, the *Romanists* are obliged to

shew their Commission; nor the Reformers, who are content to teach nothing as necessary to Salvation, but what is certainly in their Commission: and if the Charge of *Immodesty* lie any where, it certainly lieth on the R, Cs, who not only confidently teach these things themselves, but likewise impose them on their fellow Christians, and reject all peace with such as refuse their Innovations: and yet when required and challenged are able to shew no manner of Mission or Authority from Christ for what they teach, nor make it appear by any probable Argument, that Christ or his Apostles commissioned them to teach such things. If they have any such Commission, let them shew it. But instead of a Mission from Christ, they only shew one from the Roman Church; the consequence of which is, that she has commissioned her Bishops to preach a new Gospel without any Authority from Christ; and cannot say with Saint Paul, whatever she pretends, *1 Cor. 15. I have delivered unto you, that which I also received.* Let her shew that she received these Doctrines from Christ or his Apostles, and we will look on our selves as obliged to consider them. In the mean time, till we see this Commission, whether the Doctrines be true or false, we shall think our selves obliged not to teach them in Christs name. All this in effect this Gentleman has been told twice before, and it seems has not one word to answer to it, except we take that baffled pretence for an Answer, *pag. 6.* that we must not pretend a Mission from Christ by the Hands of Roman Catholick Bishops. To which it is a sufficient Answer, that we have no Mission from Christ by the Hand of Roman Catholicks, or any other Bishops, to teach the Doctrines in Dispute: and therefore we refuse to teach them. Let them shew their Commission that teach and impose them. As for the Doctrines we teach as necessary to Salvation, there is not one of them, but we are ready to shew them in the express words of our Commission. As for those which they would have us teach, our Answer is, we do not find them there. All that he says to this, is, that it is *like taking up Arms by the Kings Authority against the Kings Person.* He must have a peculiar sort of Wit who can find out the likeness of these two cases. Cannot a man refuse to act beyond the Power he finds given him in his Commission, but he must be construed to rebell against his King? If any be a Rebel, 'tis he who goes beyond the express words of his Commission, because those who brought him the Commission bid him do it. And at the same rate cannot a man refuse to teach Doctrines besides those which he finds in the Scripture, which is his Commission from Christ, but he must be construed

to use Christs *Authority against Christs Person* ? But he goes on, and would perswade us, that by the same pretence a *Lutheran Minister having received Orders from a Roman Bishop, may preach against the Sacraments of the Church of England*. To which I answer, That if the Sacraments of the Church of England are not to be found in our common Commission, the Bible, a *Lutheran or Roman Catholick*, or any body else, whoever ordained him, may preach against them. But if they are there, as they certainly are, whoever preaches against them may be damned for his false Doctrine. So far as Roman Catholicks keep to their Mission from Christ, that is, to preach the Gospel, so far we reckon their acts valid ; when they go beyond or deviate from that, their acts are null and invalid. When therefore they ordain a Bishop to preach the Gospel, their act is valid : but when withall they commission him to teach their Popish Doctrines, which are not in Christs Commission, their act is of no force : and so we *invalidate their Mission, without destroying our own*, though derived from them. Notwithstanding he with his usual confidence assures us, *we can never do it*. He is much better at putting than answering Questions ; and hence he concludes this Objection after his usual manner. *Do not, saith he, Roman Catholicks, Lutherans, &c. think they understand the Doctrine of Christ as well as you, or what extraordinary thing do you pretend to ?* To which I answer, That when Roman Catholicks, &c. confine themselves to the Power and Doctrines contained expressly in their Commission, and read and study that Commission with the same Impartiality, Diligence and Application to God for his Assistance, that we are conscious to our selves to have used ; we doubt not but they will understand the Doctrine of Christ as well as we : or if they should mistake, which we judge hardly possible, we doubt not but God will forgive them. In the mean time we pretend to this thing extraordinary, that we teach nothing as necessary to Salvation, but what can undoubtedly be proved by the Bible ; we have Hope and Charity for all those whose Errors are involuntary : we receive to Communion all that profess the common Faith of Christians, and communicate with all Churches, whose Communion doth not oblige us to profess explicitly a falshood, or commit an act directly forbidden. Whatever our *Doctrine* be, we are sure this is the truly *Catholick Temper*. We learn from our Saviour that there will be Differences and Divisions in the Church, and see no reason why God should be obliged to provide an infallible means to preserve men from Error any more than from Sin, since it is Sin, not Error, that is destructive of Salvation.

§ 8. But Fourthly. He objects, *that we have schismatically separated our selves from the Communion of our Ancestors, whom we believe to be damned, &c.* He takes notice of Bishop Bramhall's Answer to this, for which he deserves thanks; it is so clear, full and unanswerable, and so unlike every thing else in his Paper, that if he had not had something of what that Learned Primate attributes to some of his Partizans in the same page, *a leaden heart and brazen forehead*, it would have made the Author blush when he compared it with his own Thoughts (if there be any thinking) in the rest of the Paper. The Answer is in short, That *we do not condemn or separate our selves from them; nay, we are confident they were saved by a general Repentance*, because we believe their Sins were not wilful, but proceeded from want of Information and invincible Ignorance. To this he replies, That *the Presbyterians and Independents say the same, excusing their not communicating with the Church of England.* Now if ever we brought any such Argument against Presbyterians, &c. we accept this Answer from them, or rather we deserve none at all. Cannot he use a foolish Argument, but he must put it in our mouth? The Argument we use against Dissenters from our Communion, is, That we teach all those Doctrines that the Gospel has made necessary to Salvation; and teach nothing as necessary that the Gospel has not made to be so, they themselves being Judges; and we require nothing either in Faith or Practice from a Communicant that is contrary to any Command of Christ: and therefore their Separation from our Communion is unnecessary, and consequently schismatical. If the Church of Rome will stand or fall by this Argument, we are ready to joyn issue upon it. In the mean time no member of hers was ever so hardy as to offer it; and yet this Gentleman has the confidence to parallel the case between us and Papists, with that *behoves* us and the Nonconformists. However it is not our way or business to damn other people, who have the ill fortune to be mistaken: we leave it as a peculiar, to the Church of Rome, to damn those that differ in a Ceremony or Opinion from her.

§ 9. But fifthly, he objects, *that the Errors of the Roman Church were such — as might either be absent, or present, sine subjecti interitu.* And therefore he concludes, *that there was no such absolute necessity of Reformation, as that Christ's Church could not subsist without it.* To which I Answer, that it is the duty of the Governours of the Church to Reform many Errors that are not destructive to the Being of the Church. As it is the part of a Physician to cure many Distempers that are not absolutely mortal.

mortal. 2/y. Though the Errors of the *Roman* Church were not absolutely destructive to the Being of a Church, yet they were destructive to an infinite number of Souls in it, who by the ill Principles and Practices of that Church were led to Destruction, and all the rest run a manifest hazard of their Salvation by continuing in them. 3/y. Though they were not absolutely destructive to those that continued in them for want of Information, or through invincible Ignorance; yet such as had by Gods Grace been better informed, could not have expected Salvation, if they had continued in them. 4/y. As Weeds in a Garden do not immediately destroy the Fruites, or make it cease to be a Garden; and yet if they be let alone, in time they will absolutely destroy it. So the Errors of the Church of *Rome*, though at the present they did not make her cease to be a Church, yet if they had been let alone, they would and must have brought her to destruction. The Reformation prevented that, and no body knows in what condition Christianity would have been in this Western World, by this time, if it had not pleased God to awaken Men out of their profound sleep of Ignorance, Sensuality, Superstition and Blindness by the preaching of the Reformers; which has caused a Reformation in some measure even amongst R. Cs; and they daily, more and more, God be thanked, begin to be ashamed of their ill Principles.

§ 10. But sixthly, He objects, that we not only separated from the *Roman Church*, but from all other Churches. So that we cannot name the Church under the Sun whose Sacraments and Liturgy the Church of England embraces. He has been answered particularly to this long ago; and if he had had the least thing to say to the Answer, 'tis like he would have said it. But he alone, I think, of all the World has the confidence to propose again and again the same Questions, without shewing any defect in the Answers that have been given him. He has been told, that we did not separate from any one Church in the World, no not from the *Roman*. But were cast out by her, against all Reason, merely for using our own Right. That she did not require Communion but Subjection from us, and that she therefore is the Separatist. Pray, with what Church under the Sun doth the Church of *Rome* Communicate? nay, what Church doth she not damn that refuses her Subjection? She therefore is the great Separatist and Uurper in the World.

§ 11. But secondly, The Churches of *England* and *Ireland* receive the Sacraments and Liturgy of the *Grecians* and Eastern Churches, as to the

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Substantials of them. We do indeed disapprove their novel Opinions, and late Additions to their Services ; but yet we do not think them to be such, as to exclude those Churches from being Members of Christs Mystical Body. Hence we do not exclude them from our Communion, nor is there one Article in our Creeds, or Petition in our Liturgy, to which they may not generally conform. This is sufficient to vindicate our Church from giving any Reason to her Sister Churches to withdraw Communion from her. And since every Church is free and Master of her own Acts, this is all the Communion that any Church owes to her Neighbour Churches.

§ 12. But thirdly, Our Church doth actually communicate in Sacraments and Liturgy with the Forreign reformed Churches, whatever this Gentleman suggests to the contrary. The differences between Her and Them, are neither in Sacraments nor Liturgy; nor are they of such consequence as to hinder our Members to Communicate with them, when we chance to be amongst them, or Them from communicating with us. He objects, that the *Lutherans are for the Corporal Presence, and the Crucifix over the Altar, &c.* For the latter of these, if it be true, yet it signifies nothing; for they declare against all outward or inward Adoration of it. As for the former, they are not for a Corporal but Real Presence, and so are we, but as to the manner, it is not so material as to oblige us to separate Communion. They have sufficiently declared against Adoration of the Host and Transubstantiation, which are the wicked and absurd Doctrines peculiar to *Rome*.

§ 13. Fourthly. Suppose the Reformers had withdrawn Communion from other Churches to whom they owed no Subjection, till those Churches had thrown out the Corruptions crept into their Offices; this would not make them cease to be Members of the *one Catholick Church of Christ*. This Gentleman has been told, that every breach of Communion between Neighbour Churches doth not debar all the Members of those Churches from this Priviledge; witness the breach of Communion between the *Greek and Latine Churches*, the frequent breaches of Communion in the Western Church by the Factions and Schisms raised by the Popes when there were two or three at a time, and no body knew who was right Pope, but one Church sided with one, and another with another: Witness the breach between *Stephen Bishop of Rome*, and *Saint Cyprian*; between *Vigilius*, and the *Italian Bishops*. From all which it appears, that a breach of Communion between Sister Churches, doth

doth no more make them cease to be parts of the *one Catholick Church* than a War between two Nations makes either of them cease to be parts of the Society of Mankind, which alone is a sufficient Answer to his Question, which Question supposes these Falshoods: that we do not receive the Sacraments and Liturgies of other Churches, that we do not communicate with them, and that if we did not Communicate with them, we could not be Members of the Catholick Church; in every one of which he is mistaken.

§ 14. But 7. He objects, That we cannot tell where the Catholick Church was before the Reformation: he cannot tell *in what Provinces or Cities it dwelt* ——— *if it be not in O Brazeel, the Isle of Pines, or New Atlantis.* When a man comes often to one and asks the same Question every time, without taking notice of the Answers given him, it is a sign that his Head is dozed, and his Sense and Reason impaired. May not this be the case of this Gentleman? he asked this Question twice before, and was told, that the Catholick Church had members in *England, France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Greece, &c.* before and since the Reformation; and though some of these have Errors, which like Tares grew up with the good Seed, yet we suppose they did not cease to be Members of the Catholick Church. But then he proceeds to ask, *what is the reason the Church of England doth not communicate with its Sacraments and Liturgy?* No reason, Sir, at all; she doth communicate in all the Sacraments and Liturgy of the Catholick Church. If this Gentleman will but produce one Sacrament administred by the whole Catholick Church, that our Church doth not receive and communicate in; or one Prayer in the Liturgy owned by the Catholick Church, with which we do not joyn, we will own our selves Schismatics. No, the reason we do not joyn in some Sacraments, and some parts of the Roman Liturgy, is, because they are late Inventions, and never owned by the Catholick Church. If the Romanists would but take the ancient and modern Liturgies of the Church, and collect those Prayers in whose Matter and Form they all agree, and try us whether we would joyn with them, they would quickly find that we communicate in all the Sacraments and Liturgies owned by the Catholick Church; and we would desire no other Reformation of their Service in order to Communion besides this. Till this be done, it is great confidence to charge us with Separation from the Sacraments or Liturgy of the Catholick Church: Those Churches that kept to this Rule neither refuse our Communion, nor are rejected by us: and we have Charity even for those that refuse us these Catholick terms, that.

that are due, and may be justly challenged by every Sister Church.

§ 15. For we consider in the second place, that the generality of the Christians in these Western Churches were sensible of the great Corruptions in Faith and Manners that were crept into the Church before the Reformation: they complained and groaned under them, and hardly any man of Conscience or Learning but wished they were removed. But the Power of the interested Clergy was so great, and their cruelty against such as opposed their corruptions and gainful Doctrines so excessive, that few had courage enough to oppose them, till the Discontents of people became so universal, that it was impossible Force should silence them any longer; and then followed the Reformation: which was not imputable to *Luther*, but to the general Preparation and Disposition of the World at that time. They were wearied with the Viciousness, Folly, Superstition, Falseness and Ignorance of the then Clergy, the reviving of Learning had opened their eyes, and awakened them out of their profound sleep of Ignorance. And it is observable, that wherever they were left to their free choice, and to judge by Sense and Reason, they freely embraced the Reformation. This is visible in *England, Sweden, Holland, Switzerland*, and in many places of *Germany*: they had done so in *France, Spain* and *Italy*, if they had had the same Liberty allowed them, and therefore their not joining in the Reformation, is not to be reckoned any free Act of those Churches, but is intirely imputable to the fraud and violence of a few interested wicked Clergy and Bigots; I should not have said thus much, if this Gentleman had not forced me to it by his often repeated Questions, by asking again and again with what Church we communicate? I Answer with the Churches of *Denmark, Sweden, Holland, Germany, Switzerland*: All which Churches whatever he suggests to the contrary, we own as Members of the Catholick Church, and embrace their Sacraments and Communion. We communicate likewise with all the knowing and honest party of the Churches of *France, Spain*, and *Italy*, who were left to their free choice, and not circumvented by fraud, or forc'd by compulsion. Lastly, with all Christian Churches in those things that they retain of our common Christianity; if they add to, or diminish from those necessary Truths, or Practices, we are not obliged to communicate in their Errors.

§ 16. But eighthly, He objects, that the Reformers regarded no Church at all, that was then extant, no, not their own Bishops. To the first, I Answer, that he is not able to produce one Article which the Reformers

formers rejected, that was received by all the Churches then extant. The Catholick Faith is that Faith which is received by all true Churches, at all times, and in all places. If he can shew one Article thus received by catholick consent, and yet rejected by the Reformers, he will say something: but till he shews some such Article, it is great confidence in him to charge them with want of regard to the Churches then extant; the want of that regard lies on the Roman Church, who dares define Articles of Faith as necessary to Salvation without the catholick consent of her Sister Churches. From which it is plain she has no regard to the Catholick Church, but only to her own private Interest.

§ 17. He produces *Fox* and Doctor *Burnets* Testimony to prove that the Reformers had no regard to their own Bishops, and tells us, that *we may examine them at leisure*. But their Testimonys have been examined already, and his Mistakes made so visible, that any one who valued Truth, or were ashamed to be found in a Lie, would blush to produce them again. He pretends that the Bishops were terrified into a *Submission to the pretended Reformation* — and so it could not be the voluntary act and deed of the English Bishops; consequently it was void and null in it self. If this be true, 'tis a demonstration that we are not to rely on Bishops or Teachers in matters of Faith and Religion, since they may be terrified and frighten'd into false Doctrine: and if they may be sway'd by Fear, why may not Ignorance, Negligence, Ambition, Interest or Covetousness prevail with them to teach Doctrines of Profit, Honour and worldly Advantage, such as Purgatory, Indulgence, Supremacy and Transubstantiation? What Security have we of the Determinations of the Council of *Trent*? of which one of its members, the Bishop of *Five Churches*, in his Letter to *Maximilian* the Emperor, gives this Account, *We daily saw hungry and needy Bishops come to Trent, Youths for the most part, which did but begin to have Beards, given over to Luxury and Riot, hired only to give their Voices as the Pope pleased: they were unlearned and simple, yet fit for the purpose, in regard of their impudent Boldness*. If the act and deed of frightened Judges be null and void in it self. I hope the act and deed of bribed and corrupted Judges is no less void and null; especially Judges corrupted by such a Pope as managed this Council; of whom *Thuanus*, a Roman Catholick, gives this Character, *tom. 2. part. 3. lib. 38. ad Ann. 1565. Palam iracundus, occulte invidus, ad audiendum impatiens & difficilis, in responsis acerbus, dominandi cupidus, vaser, & summus dissimulandi artifex, cum tamen simplex & hebe-*

rior haberi vellet; natura timidus, promptus tamen ad occultandam audaciæ specie formidinem, parum beneficiorum memor, pecuniæ avidus, & ad eam undique corradendum vel cum alienâ injuriâ attentus, — in villu cibi vinique profusus, & in voluptates promus, quæ ei supremum diem accelerâsse creduntur. That is in short, Pius quartus was passionate, envious, impatient, peevish, surly and ambitious, a cheating, dissembling, cowardly, huffing, ingrateful, covetous, oppressing, gluttonous, intemperate, lascivious man, by which he was believed to have hastened his own Death.

This was the Pope that managed and confirmed the Council of *Trent*, and compiled the present Creed of the Roman Church; and let the Reader judge whether we have not reason to suspect the Decrees of such a Pope and Council: or whether, we ought to renounce our Senses and Reason to comply blindly with them.

§ 18. But 2^{ly}. He alledges, that the Reformation could not be the voluntary act and deed of the English Bishops, because *they held their Bishopricks only during the Kings Pleasure*, and consequently all they did was null and void in it self. A most excellent Rule, if he will but stand by it. And from this it unavoidably follows, that all Sentences given by the Judges in cases between the King and his Subjects are null and void in themselves; because they hold their Places during the Kings Pleasure: All Laws made by those that are in Employments under the King, during Pleasure, that is, a great part of the Laws now extant, are null and void; and perhaps he holds some Benefice himself during the Kings Pleasure, and so we cannot be certain that his printing these sculking Papers, are his voluntary act and deed; it is possible he may do it to secure his Income: and so all he says is null and void, of no force at all. But other men understand other Obligations besides those of Profit, and we ought not to suppose, that they will violate their Honour or Consciences to secure their Preferments.

§ 19. But 3^{ly}. He alledges, that *for the most part Bishops of Churches & Diocesses were changed — and some committed to one Ward and some to another*; and yet after all there were but five deprived or committed, and not all those for opposing the Reformation; as has been made appear beyond contradiction, one wou'd think, to his shame, if he had any. But observe from this what opinion he has of the Clergy before the Reformation; there were then about 16000 Clergymen in *England*, and he would perswade us that *many of the Bishops and most of the Clergy* dissembled their Religion, and *were all the while Papists in their hearts*. If this be true, it justifies the Re-

Reformers, though they had disregarded the Judgment of such *Pastors and Bishops*; who plainly sacrificed their Conscience, Honesty and Religion to their Gain; and it had been well done to have rid the Church of such a pack of Dissemblers. But we believe better things of the Clergy of that time, than to think sixteen thousand Men were frightened out of their Conscience and Religion, because four or five lost the Profits of their Bishopricks. It is more to be suspected that they dissembled in Queen *Mary's* time, when twelve thousand were turned out, and above two hundred persons burnt.

§ 20. The ninth Objection against the Reformers is, that the *good people of these Nations never dreamt of a thing call'd a Republick, or free state before the blessed days of Reformation.* Confidence and Ignorance put a Man upon many desperate attempts and harden him against blushing when he fails of success. And this I take to be this Mans case, there can hardly be a greater piece of Confidence than this Assertion, or greater Ignorance than to ascribe the *Dreams of a Republick*, to the free use of the Scripture. For first, if by *good People*, he mean such as are really good, they never dreamt of a Republick since the Reformation; if he mean bad people, they dreamt of it long before the Reformation in the days of *Henry III.* when they divested the King of his Regal Power, and appointed 24 to be Conservators of their Liberty. And the long Series of the Barons Wars was nothing else but the struggling of a Faction under pretence of the Liberty of the Subject against the Kings Power. In which *Simon de Montfort*, the Son of him who had slaughtered so many Hereticks was the chief. But secondly, it is great Ignorance to ascribe the dreams of a free State to the Reformation, or to the free use of the Scripture, since it was near a hundred years after that Liberty allowed the People of these Nations, that these Dreams came into the Heads of a few. Thirdly, Those Dreamers seldom pretended Scripture, as the reason of their Dreams; on the contrary, they founded their Pretences on the Law of Nature, and the Original Right of Mankind, and the chiefest difficulty that lay on them in point of Argument was to defend themselves against the Scriptures, which are in no ways favourable to a free State. 4. Men dreamt and erected free States in the very depth of Popery; witness the States of *Venice, Florence, Lucca, Pisa*, if the Original of these States be inquired into 'twill be found that they rose by Rebellion against the Eastern Emperours first, and then against the Western by Insigation of the Pope. 5. Those places are as tenacious of their

Liberties that have not the use of Scripture, as those who have. The little Republick of *Norcia*, that admits no Man who can so much as Read to be a Governour, love their Liberty as well as *Geneva*, where the Scriptures are freely used. *Venice*, *Genoua*, and the Popish Cantons of *Switzerland*, are as Jealous of their Freedom as *Holland*. Sixthly, People live under Monarchies as peaceably in reformed Countries, as Popish; and with this advantage, that they do it of themselves, without force: Whereas in most Popish Monarchies they are forced to keep a constant standing Army to keep Subjects in awe, witness *France*, *Florence*, *Naples*, *Sicily*. Seventhly, The Dreams of the good People of these Kingdoms were only some Images they had received from the practice of their Popish Neighbours, their Covenant was transcribed from the Holy League; their Committee of Safety, from the Council of Sixteen in *Paris*; and the Pretences of the Parliament to command the King from the Pretences of the general Assembly of *France*, not only to controll but depose the Monarch, exclude the right Heir, and elect a new King. Lastly, Compare with the Republicans in *England*, the general Assembly and Supreme Council of the confederate R. Cs. of *Ireland*, and this alone will demonstrate, that the Dreams of a free State are not peculiar to the Reformed, or any way imputable to Mens understanding Scripture, according to every Mans Judgment of Discretion. So then, if these be *the News* he pretends to tell us, he ought to be punished as a Publisher of false News.

C H A P. V.

§ I. **T**HE fourth thing in his Paper, is his Apology for Roman Catholics. I find only three or four things of this nature.

First, Then he tells us, that his Paper doth not deny the modest use of Reason in Matters of Religion — but that it ought to be governed by the Grace of God, that is, with Charity and Humility. If he will but allow Sense and Reason to be good Judges in Matters of Faith when used with Modesty, Charity and Humility, he might have saved the labour of Writing his Letter. For no Protestant ever pleaded for their being Judges in any other Sense. It seems then his Paper has a wrong Title put to it. It ought to be a Letter to a Friend shewing the vanity of this Opinion that every Mans Sense and Reason when managed with

with Presumption, Uncharitableness and Pride ought to guide him in matters of Faith; or rather that every Mans Passion, not Sense or Reason ought to guide him, for that is truly the Case: Since a Man who uses his Reason without Modesty, Charity, or Humility is not guided by his Reason but his Passion. If he had stated therefore the case, before he pretended to dispute, which he never yet did, he would have found no Adversary to confute. I would only desire him to tell us, who shall be Judge, whether a Protestant is guilty of Presumption or Pride in the use of his Reason; for these are Vices transacted in the Mind, and only God and a Mans own Conscience can certainly know them. So that after all, a Man must be left to judge for himself at his own Peril. His Soul is at stake, and if he will deceive himself with Partiality, Prejudice, Presumption, or Pride, he may damn himself as well by them as by any other Sin, and no Body can hinder him.

§ 2. But Secondly, he pleads for himself, that *the uncertainty of Reason is such, that a Wise Man cannot trust it, when it contradicts the received Faith of the Church.* To which I Answer, that how uncertain soever he pretends Sense and Reason to be, God has given us no other Faculties to govern us in all the important affairs of Religion and Life: And therefore he who disputes against the certainty of these, disputes against God, and undermines not only the Christian Faith, but all Religion. But Secondly, Sense and Reason are not uncertain in all things: I am infallibly certain from my Reason that two and three make five, that Murder and Rebellion are Sins; that there is a God, and that he ought to be worshiped. I am infallibly certain from my Senses, that I have this Paper which I Answer before me; and if all the Authority in the World should determine against any of these, I ought to despise it. I have as much certainty that Transubstantiation is false, and the Roman Church has erred, as that there is a Roman Church; in these there is no uncertainty at all, though in remote and difficult things a Man may be uncertain; yet in these that lie near, every Mans Sense and Reason are infallible, if he will trust them. Thirdly, Suppose Sense and Reason were uncertain, yet since we have no other Faculties which we can trust, we ought to make the best of them, and use the more care, diligence, and caution in the use of them, and be the more earnest with God in continual Prayers to obtain his assistance to strengthen these Faculties, to secure them from Errors, or pardon our mistakes if we fall into any. Fourthly, I would willingly know what Church that is, whose *received Faith Reason*

contradicts; a man has no way that we know to distinguish a true Church from a false, but by examining the Authority and Faith of each by his Sense and Reason. By these he must choose his Church if he act rationally. If therefore he find his Sense or Reason contradict the Faith of any Church, he needs no other motive to convince him that this is a false Church. We are assured that neither contradict the received Faith of the Church of Christ, and whoever asserts the contrary must be esteemed by all thinking men a friend to Atheists. If a man were to convince a Jew or Turk, all that he could desire were to make him own that Sense and Reason contradicted the received Faith of his Church. If after the Turk or Jew own'd this, he should continue in that Faith or Church, all the reasonable part of the world would judge him self-condemned, and that it was meer obstinacy and perverseness, that kept him in his Error; for which, without Repentance, he would undoubtedly be damned. Yet here is a Gentleman that vindicates him in his Obstinacy, and would persuade us that Modesty obliges a man not to trust his Reason when it contradicts the received Faith of the Church. But pray God preserve us from such a Faith and Church as Sense and Reason contradict. All wise men will renounce them as soon as they perceive it.

§ 3. But thirdly. He pleads in favour of their Church, that she is a *true Church of Christ, retaining all the Fundamentals of Christian Religion* — and then at the same time to be *drowned in damnable Idolatry, and to err in matters of Faith is a strange Riddle among Protestants, and harder to conceive than Transubstantiation*. Now this is a plain Falshood; since this may be a Riddle to such as this Writer, but is none at all amongst Protestants, who can as easily conceive the Roman Church to retain all the Fundamentals of Christian Religion, and yet be guilty of Idolatry, as they can conceive a man to have all his Limbs, and yet be sick of the Plague. He has been told long ago what Idolatry is consistent, and what is not consistent with the Being of a Church: he might likewise have heard, that there is a great difference between Matters and Essentials of Faith, and that an Error in the Essentials of Faith destroys the Being of a Church, though every Error in Matters of Faith doth not, and he hath not objected one Word or Syllable against all this; yet he writes on, and commits the same mistakes, as if he had never been told of them: but it is the way of some of his party to take no notice when they are answered and baffled, but to start a new thing, which is generally

generally the old answered Arguments in a new dress; and if a man will not blot more Paper to repeat his Answers, as they have done the Arguments, they cry out 'Tis unanswerable. This Gentleman has twice shifted off replying by this Artifice, and still starts from the business in this very Argument of the Consistency of Idolatry with a true Church, and yet has not been able to produce one new thought upon it, or in the least attempt the Defence of his Arguments. And let R. Cs. pretend what they will, while we find in Scripture that God owned the Ten Tribes, notwithstanding their Idolatry, for his People and a true Church, 'tis a demonstration that Idolatry and a true Church are not inconsistent. And whereas he alledges, that *their Idolatry it seems is very harmless*; I answer, that such as fall into it for want of Information, or through invincible Prejudices, we hope will obtain Mercy from God, to whose righteous Judgment we leave them. But our concern and duty is, to keep our selves free from it; since by Gods Goodness we know the guilt and hazard thereof.

§ 4. The fourth thing he pleads for his Church is, that *we allow every Man his Judgment of Discretion, that is, a Liberty to think, or not think as we do in matters of Religion* — and then he sees *not how we can find fault, much less persecute any Mans Opinion, without contradicting our selves*. This is a Conclusion might very well be expected from a Man that had renounced Sense and Reason, and from none else. By this Argument, because St. Paul not only allowed but commanded the *Corinthians*, 1 Ep. 10. 15. to judge what he said; therefore if any perverted his Words he must not find fault with them. At the same rate of Reasoning; because a Man refers a matter to Arbitrators, and allows them to judge it, therefore though they do never so manifest injustice, he shall not blame them. Because God set Good and Evil before Men, and allowed them to choose which they would, therefore he shall not punish them when they do Evil. Because *Joshua*, chap. 24. 15. allows the people to *choose this day whom you will serve, whether the Gods which your Fathers served, — or the Lord*. Therefore if he stuck to *this Principle*, he could not find fault with them though they chose to serve strange Gods. But this Gentleman doth not observe that in all these Cases though every Man be allowed his Judgment of Discretion; yet it is at his peril, that is, as he will answer it to God and the Magistrate. If a Man through Passion, or Prejudice think amiss in Religion, he must answer it to God, and he is obliged, as he tenders his Salvation to be careful and sincere in his Judgment; and as he must Answer for his Opinions and Thoughts to
God,

God, so he must answer for his outward Actions to the Magistrate; and if he act any thing against the Peace or Safety of the Kingdom where he lives, 'tis at the peril of his Life, Fortune, or Liberty. So notwithstanding our Principle, an Heretick, that is, a wilful perverter of the Faith may be damned; and a Thief, or Rebel may be hanged: And if the consideration of this hazard will not make Men careful in matters of Judgment, and honest in matters of Practice, I confess we want means to oblige them. The *Roman Church*. 'tis true has some ways to prevent Heresies and reduce Hereticks, which we want. One is Ignorance which she practised universally before the Reformation, and at present keeps up in *Spain* and *Italy*. The second is, Croisado's, or Levying Armies, by proposing to them the Pardon of their Sins for rooting out Heresie; thus she served the *Albigenses* and *Bohemians*. The third, is the Holy Office of the Inquisition, by which some hundred thousand Hereticks have been dispatched, more than suffered of Christians in the Heathen Persecutions. The fourth is the new art of *Dragooning*, which is found a much more effectual way of determining Controversies in *France* than Sense and Reason. As for these ways of concluding Mens Judgments and convincing them, we must own we want them, and I hope ever shall. And if it be any immodesty to condemn them, we cannot deny but we are guilty of it; and think Schisms and Heresies, and all other Inconveniences that arise from the mistaken use of Sense and Reason much more tolerable than these.

ANIMADVERSION.

TO satisfy the Reader, that the Author of this Letter is not only weak in his Reasons, but ignorant, or careless in Matter relating to the Church. Let him take one example. p. 1. He tells us, *that the first Council of Nice was about the year 318 after Christ*. Now the Council was really in the year 325, but the number of the Bishops that sat in it was 318. He had heard something of this number 318. but as appears, he did not know whether it belonged to the Bishops or the years; and for want of a little pains to inform himself by the use of his Senses, he ignorantly applies the number of the Bishops who sat in Council to the number of the Years. In such mistakes men are apt to fall that take the History of the Church from *Oral Tradition*, that is, *Hear-say*, and not from Books. And yet this *Oral Tradition*, or *Hear-say*; which leads this Gentleman into such palpable mistakes is the chief thing that Roman Catholicks have to oppose against Sense, Reason, and Scripture, as the Foundation of their Faith and Religion.

Errata. Page 28. line 28. instead of *and us*, read *between us and*. page 29. line 35. instead of *great* read *gratest*.



